



## Leasehold Management – Service Standards

The Home Ownership Team is committed to delivering a high-quality service to our customers. We want to involve you in a meaningful way in order to continually improve what we do. These 'Service Standards' set out what you can expect from us.

### Our objectives are:

#### New Leaseholders

- Provide you with a comprehensive '**welcome pack**' when you become a leaseholder, which includes copies of our main booklets for leaseholders.
- Arrange **induction sessions** for new leaseholders whether you purchased your property under the right-to-buy scheme or on the open market.

#### Your annual service charges

- Issue your **estimated** annual service charge in March each year.
- Issue your **actual** service charge (for the previous financial year), within six months of the end of the financial year.
- Provide you with two booklets each year – to explain your Estimated and Actual service charges
- Provide you with a breakdown of your **day-to-day repairs** (on request), if we have charged you for this in your actual account.
- Arrange out-of-office hours **surgeries**, or out-of-hours times for **telephone advice** after we have issued your estimated or your actual annual service charge account.

## Bills for major works

- We will send you the invoice (for your estimated cost of the work) soon after our contractor starts on site. At the same time we will let you know the ways to pay your invoice and we will enclose a summary of your legal rights regarding your invoice.
- We will send you a copy of our booklet *Paying for major works invoices* which gives full details of our payment options plus a lot of other useful information
- When the work is finished we will send you the final account within three months. If we are unable to do this, we will write to you to say why.
- We will send you a breakdown of the costs with the final account which will show how the actual costs compare with the original estimate.
- If you wish, we will arrange for you to inspect our accounts and the supporting documents when your final account is issued.
- We will provide you with a copy of the FENSA Certificate for your new windows and doors on request. We will let you know the guarantee period for work such as a new roof.
- We will not issue a separate invoice for any work less than £250. Instead it will be listed as part of the repairs in your annual actual service charge. This is to avoid you having to pay an additional charge for administration (a 'management fee').
- We are very committed to good customer care at every stage of the work. We expect our staff and contractors to meet high standards throughout. Please see the booklet, *Decent homes: A guide for residents* for more details.

## Payments options

- We will provide you with flexible ways of paying your **annual service charge** account. You can pay every three months or through monthly instalments by direct debit or by standing order.
- Provide you with a choice of payment options for paying your **major works bill**.
- If you need a loan from a bank or building society to pay your major works bill, we will offer you up to six weeks to arrange this.
- If you would like more information we will be glad to discuss the payment options with you on a one to one basis.
- If you are on a low income and have problems paying your invoice, we can make an appointment for you to see the Citizens' Advice Bureau. We have an arrangement with them to fast-track our referrals.

## Methods of payment

- Payments can be made via Haringey Council's automated telephone payment service, or on-line: [www.homesforharingey.org](http://www.homesforharingey.org) – see our booklets or the website for more details.

## Enquiries

- We will respond to your enquiry about any **leasehold matter** within 10 working days, in a way that is clear and easy to understand, whether you contact us by phone, letter or email.
- We will offer you a suitable **appointment** to see someone from the Home Ownership Team if you would like this. You will be seen at the Customer Services Centre, 48 Station Road, Wood Green, London N22 7TY.
- Provide a detailed **statement** of the transactions on your **service charge account** on request.
- We may agree to mediation where a dispute cannot be resolved through our complaints procedure.

## Sign posting

- We will suggest where you can obtain help and advice from organisations outside the Council, if we are unable to respond to your enquiry.

## Communication

- We publish **regular information** regarding leasehold matters in the Leaseholder News section of Homes Zone (the magazine for all our residents).
- We provide a lot of information on the Homes for Haringey website including copies of all our booklets, back issues of Homes Zone and the minutes of the Leasehold Panel.
- Keep you informed of **our performance**, also take on board comments you make through the Leasehold Panel, and the Leaseholders' Forum in order to improve our service.

## Consultation

- We always consult our leaseholders more than we have to by law about any major work likely to cost them over £250.

- We will ensure you are consulted about any new **long-term agreement** planned to last longer than 12 months.
- We will write to you at the beginning of the financial year, if your property is in the decent homes programme for that year to give a description of the work that has been planned and invite you to an Advice Day, which will include information on the payment options.
- We also publish information on our website about the work planned for each address.
- We will let all residents living in the building know what is happening through newsletters and a local meeting.
- Home Ownership officers will be ready to attend resident meetings during the consultation period or arrange a home visit if you have a long- term illness or you are severely disabled.
- We will send all leaseholders (in the building) a Section 20 Notice to provide details of the works and an estimate of the cost. You will receive this at least 30 days before the work is due to start.
- You have the right to send us your comments in writing and we will reply within 21 days.
- If the cost of work increases by more than 10% above the original estimate, we will inform you of the increase and the reason for it, while the work is being carried out.
- After the work is finished we will write to you to confirm that the work has been completed and tell you who you should contact to report any faults during the 12-month defects liability period and find out whether any problems remain to be dealt with.
- We will ask you for your views through satisfaction questionnaires.

## Getting involved

- We consult with the Leasehold Panel on service delivery issues, new policies and any new long-term agreements.
- It generally meets once a month and at least four times a year. It is open to any leaseholder who would like to attend. Please phone 020 8489 3487 or email [leasehold.panel@homesforharingey.org](mailto:leasehold.panel@homesforharingey.org) for more details.
- We will involve you in the decisions we make, listening to what you and your representatives say, and tell you how we have changed our service as a result of the suggestions you have made
- The Leasehold Panel arranges a meeting of the **Leaseholders' Forum and Workshops** when major issues arise. All council leaseholders in the borough receive an invitation to attend.
- We are committed to informing you of other ways you can get involved in making decisions that will affect the management of your building and estate.

## **Windows and doors**

- If you wish to install your own windows and doors you must first apply to us to do so. We will usually be able to allow this, provided you can have it done before our contractors start work on site. Please phone 020 8489 3357 or email [Right2buy@HomesforHaringey.org](mailto:Right2buy@HomesforHaringey.org) for more details and a copy of our booklet '*Install your own windows and doors – a guide for leaseholders*'.

## **Other services**

- We will provide you with the necessary information if you wish to buy kitchen and bathroom fittings as supplied by our contractors under the decent homes programme – the contact details are the same as for windows and doors (above).
- We have now arranged a convenient way for you to have your gas appliances including your boiler serviced.